

splash!

quick facts on...

## Recreation Opportunities in Stormwater Treatment Areas

APRIL 2016

**The South Florida Water Management District** is a regional governmental agency that manages the water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

**Our Mission** is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.

**W**ith their vivid red and pink feathers, adult roseate spoonbills are easy visual targets for even novice bird-watchers making their first foray into a constructed wetland. But more recreational experiences, including hiking, nature viewing and hunting, are waiting for day trippers to several of these unique wetlands designed by the South Florida Water Management District to aid in Everglades restoration.

### How a Stormwater Treatment Area Works

The key purpose of stormwater treatment areas is to remove phosphorus from urban and agricultural runoff flowing into the Everglades. Too much of the nutrient phosphorus promotes an overgrowth of plant life and alters the habitat that Florida's native plants and animals need to thrive.

Stormwater treatment areas remove phosphorus from runoff water by channeling it

through shallow marshes filled with aquatic plants such as cattail, southern naiad, hydrilla and algae. These plants take up or absorb phosphorus from water traveling through, reducing to very low levels the amount of the nutrients reaching the Everglades.

Plants in the stormwater treatment area keep working even after they die. Cattail plants remove phosphorus from decomposing leaves that become wetland sediments. Finally, the limestone layer beneath the sediment absorbs and holds phosphorus, providing decades of phosphorus storage.

### Recreation at Stormwater Treatment Areas

Stormwater treatment areas provide another bonus – prime home and visiting territory to wildlife including wading birds, ducks and American alligators.

Through partnerships with the District, scheduled bird-watching tours are offered by local Audubon chapters at four stormwater treatment areas. More information is available on the District's website, or by contacting the Audubon chapters directly. Other recreational opportunities abound, including bicycling, hiking, nature viewing and photography. Waterfowl and alligator hunting also are permitted in some stormwater treatment areas during weekends designated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. (See STA details on next page)

Visit the District's recreation web page at [www.sfwmd.gov/recreation](http://www.sfwmd.gov/recreation) to plan and customize your next outdoor adventure on public lands.



## STAs: Where to Go and What to Do

**Stormwater Treatment Area 1 East (STA-1E)** in Palm Beach County features a public access point with parking, an information kiosk and a dry vault toilet. Hikers, bicyclers and bird-watchers can use the more than 7-mile levee trail connecting STA 1 East and West. Catch and release fishing is allowed from the banks inside the levees. Boating is not permitted. The recreation area is open from sunrise to sunset on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Seasonal, guided bird-watching tours are offered by Audubon of the Everglades.

**Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West (STA-1W)** in Palm Beach County features a public access point with parking, an information kiosk, a dry vault toilet and a 200-foot nature-viewing platform and gazebos overlooking the wetland. Hikers, bicyclers and bird-watchers can use the more than 7-mile levee trail connecting STA 1 West and East. Non-motorized boats such as canoes and kayaks can be launched into the perimeter canal. The recreation area is open from sunrise to sunset on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. On designated weekends, the area is open for waterfowl and alligator hunts managed by the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission \(FWC\)](#).

**Stormwater Treatment Area 2 (STA-2)** in Palm Beach County is open for seasonal waterfowl and alligator hunts managed by the FWC, and seasonal guided birdwatching tours offered by the Audubon Society.

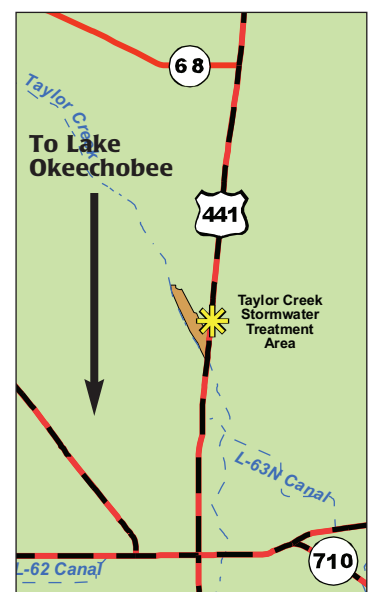
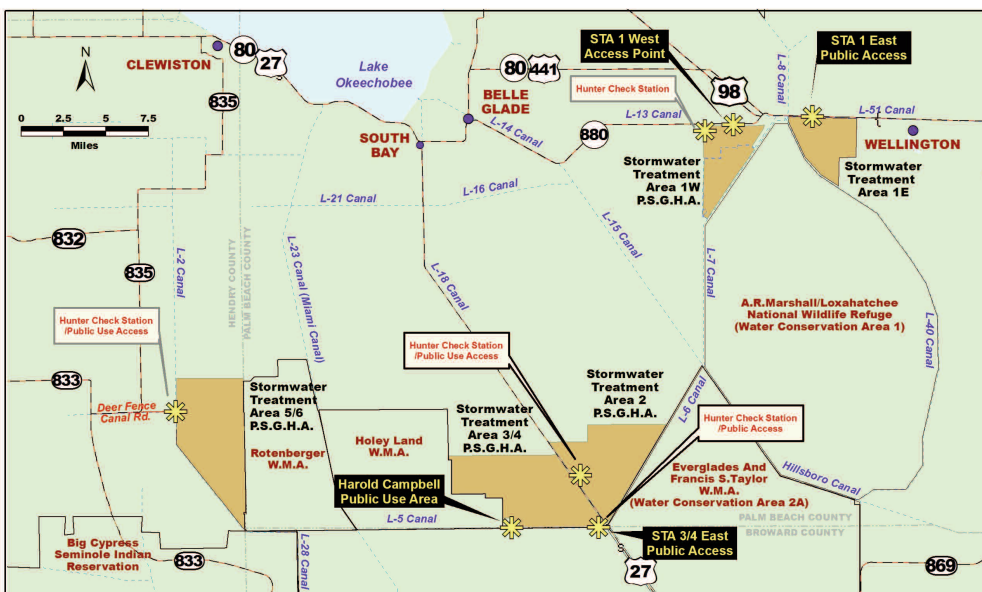
**Stormwater Treatment Area 3/4 (STA-3/4)** in Palm Beach County offers two public access points. The western Harold A. Campbell Public Use Facility features information kiosks, paved

parking, concrete sidewalks and restrooms for hikers, bicyclers and bird-watchers. A public dual-lane boat ramp is open seven days a week and offers access to 27 miles of perimeter canals. The STA-3/4 East entrance provides parking and toilet facilities, along with informational signage and access to levee trails. Both recreational areas are open from sunrise to sunset on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. On designated weekends in specific areas of the STA, waterfowl and alligator hunts are managed by the FWC.

**Stormwater Treatment Area 5/6 (STA-5/6)** in Hendry County features a public access point with parking, a nature-viewing platform and a hiking trail. Hikers, bicyclers and bird-watchers can use more than 20 miles of levee trail. The recreation area is open from sunrise to sunset on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Seasonal, guided bird-watching tours are offered by the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society. On designated weekends, the area is open for waterfowl and alligator hunts managed by the FWC.

**Taylor Creek Stormwater Treatment Area** in Okeechobee County features thatched-roof chickee huts with picnic tables, trail benches and a 3-mile levee trail open for hiking, bicycling and bird-watching. This recreational area includes a gravel parking lot and composting toilet, and is open from sunrise to sunset, seven days a week. It is maintained by Okeechobee County, (863) 763-6950.

**Lakeside Ranch Stormwater Treatment Area** in western Martin County is open for daily use including hiking, biking and wildlife viewing.



P.S.G.H.A. = Public Small Game Hunting Area

W.M.A. = Wildlife Management Area



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[sfwmd.gov](http://sfwmd.gov)

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